(d) if so, what steps are contemplated by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) Does not arise.

(d) Does not arise.

Remark by Indonesian Food Minister against Hindus

1327. SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that Hindus in the land of Bali have strongly opposed an insulting remark by Indonesian Food Minister against the Hindu minorities in the country; and

(b) if so, what steps Government have taken in this regards?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE): (a) Yes. A large number of Hindus held rallies and demonstrations in Bali, protesting against Mr. A.M. Saefuddin, the Indonesian State Minister for Food and Horticulture, demanding that he should either step down or be sacked by the President. Mr. Saefuddin had earlier made a statement that he had a better chance than Ms. Megawati Sukarnoputri, of becoming the next President of Indonesia as Ms. Megawati was a Hindu and it was unlikely that a predominantly muslim country like Indonesia would accept her as President. Mr. Saefuddin belongs to the United Democratic Party and is known to have Presidential ambitions. Ms. Megawati, leader of a faction of Indonesian Democratic Party (PDI), recently held a very successful congress in Bali in October 1998 and is being viewed as a strong contender for the post of President in the next elections likely to be held next year. Mr. Saefuddin subsequently apologised for his statement.

(b) The Government of India is of the opinion that Mr. Saefuddin's remarks targetting Ms. Megawati were apparently made in the context of domestic politics in Indonesia and as such it does not warrant any intervention with the Indonesian government.

Commercial and Economic Department of Indian High Commission in London

1328. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Indian High Commission in London has a Commercial and Economic Department;

(b) if so, what are its functions; and

(c) what, according to assessment, if any, are its achievements in the matter of assisting the Indian exporters in the promotion of their trade in the British market and vice-versa?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The main function of the Economic and Commercial Wing of the High Commission of India, London, is to promote India's economic and commercial interest in the UK. This, *inter-alia*, includes promoting Indian exports in the British market, encouraging investments from the UK and facilitating industrial and technical collaborations between the India and British commercial organisations. In addition, the Economic and Commercial Wing has also been attempting to build and promote an India Brand Equity, both in terms of the country and specific products.

(c) The Economic and Commercial Wing has provided assistance to Indian